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THE GRAFTON PORTRAIT

THE Story of the "Grafton"
Portrait of William Shakespeare
“ÆTATIS SVÆ 24, 1588”
with an account of the Sack and
Destruction of the Manor House
of Grafton Regis by the Parlia-
mentary Forces on Christmas
——— Eve, 1643 ——

BY
THOMAS KAY

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“Plain pathed experience the unlearned’s guide,
Her simple following evidently shews
Sometimes what schoolmen scarcely can decide,
Nor yet what reason absolutely knows.”

Michael Drayton.

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I.

P R E F A C E

The telling of the following story has been prompted by the discovery of a picture which the author, from evidence collected by him and set out in these pages, submits to be a genuine portrait of Shakespeare painted during his lifetime.

The portrait has painted upon it an age "24" and a date "1588," the age corresponding with that of Shakespeare in the same year.

An analytical comparison is made between this and other recognised portraits of Shakespeare. An account is also given of the sack and destruction of Grafton House, Grafton Regis, on Christmas Eve, 1643, by the Parliamentary forces when the house was plundered of its pictures and treasures.

The circumstances above related may with further investigation throw some light upon that little-known period of Shakespeare's career preceding the first production of his works.

Since very little is really known about William Shakespeare, any scrap of new information, no matter how trifling, especially about his youth, is of the greatest value when it affords the opportunity of obtaining a clearer view of his personality or of penetrating the mystery that surrounds every period of his life. While we know a great

deal about Dante from contemporary portraits and allusions, our knowledge of Shakespeare is confined to a few facts that could be written on a sheet of notepaper.

As the poet's admirers are not satisfied that the bust above his grave in the Church, or that any other portrait gives a true presentment of his features, except the engraving in the "First Folio," which is an inartistic picture of the man in his declining years, it is of manifest importance that no picture with honest claims should be rejected until the evidence brought forward in its favour has been thoroughly scrutinised and placed on record, lest that which is so much to be desired should be lost.

The "Grafton" picture has therefore been acquired, registers and other records have been consulted, and every effort has been made by personal enquiries in and around Grafton Regis to obtain information as to the occurrences at Grafton House and the traditions and other matters relating to the Smiths—the yeoman family who held in their possession from the early part of the 17th century a painting of so much importance.

Moreover, the possibility that England might lose the possession of the picture increased the desire to purchase it. An offer was made to and accepted by the owners, who, however, from its

*Note by the Executors of the late
Mr. Thomas Kay*

¶ The publication of this work, which it was intended should take place in the autumn of 1914, has unavoidably been postponed owing to the illness and lamented death of the author and the outbreak of war.

¶ The Grafton Portrait was bequeathed by Mr. Kay to the John Rylands Library, Manchester, and has been accepted by the Governors of that Institution.

*Stockport,
June, 1915.*



PREFACE

having been long in the possession of the family, were reluctant to part with it. The portrait was purchased on February 8th, 1909, and was first exhibited at Manchester on the next day at a meeting of the "Fortnightly Society" on the occasion of a recital by the writer and his friends of his "Songs from Sentences in Shakespeare."

The owner of the picture is making arrangements for presenting it to some suitable institution in which it may be preserved for exhibition, so that it shall not be allowed to leave England.

*Stockport,
May, 1914.*





THE “GRAFTON” SHAKESPEARE

“Mine eye hath play’d the painter and hath stel’d
 Thy beauty’s form in table of my heart ;
 My body is the frame wherein ’tis held,
 And perspective it is best painter’s art.
 For through the painter must you see his skill,
 To find where your true image pictur’d lies,
 Which in my bosom’s shop is hanging still,
 That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
 Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done :
 Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
 Are windows to my breast, where through the sun
 Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee ;
 Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,
 They draw but what they see, know not the heart.”

Shakespeare’s Sonnets, XXIV.

On February 18th, 1907, there appeared in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian* a photographic reproduction of what was described as “the supposed portrait of Shakespeare which has been found in a village inn near Darlington.” An-

THE “GRAFTON” SHAKESPEARE

nouncements of a similar kind, together with reproductions of the picture, also appeared in most of the leading newspapers, with the result that the subject aroused considerable public interest.

The present writer, being possessed of the necessary leisure and having had considerable experience in portraiture, put himself in communication with the owners of the picture, the Misses Ludgate of Winston-on-Tees, and eventually journeyed thither to inspect it.

A feeling of disappointment was experienced at the first view of the portrait in its mean-looking frame and bearing marks of neglect and maltreatment, but it was some consolation to find that it had not been violated by the hand of any pseudo-restorer, that no attempts had been made to hide its defects or to improve its appearance, and that, however much the picture had suffered from neglect and ignorance, it possessed intrinsic merits of style and treatment which artistically are extremely interesting.

At the time the portrait was first exhibited in Manchester there appeared in the pages of the *Connoisseur* for February, 1909, an article which for its able criticism upon this picture in particular is worth quoting. It is entitled “The Grafton



THE BRIDGEWATER ARMS, WINSTON

HISTORY OF THE PORTRAIT

Portrait of Shakespeare." The writer says that in response to a letter of enquiry addressed to the Misses Agnes and F. Ludgate (Mrs. Ludgate having passed away) they with great courtesy gave him the history of the picture.

He then proceeds :—

"The facts are these : The portrait had been in their family for five or six generations at an old farmhouse belonging to the Dukes of Grafton¹ in the village of Grafton, tenanted for more than two hundred years by their forefathers, who farmed under successive Dukes. At the death of Miss Ludgate's grandfather, about the year 1876, it came into the possession of her mother, and when she died it descended to herself and her sister. It had come into their immediate family through a rich old uncle of their mother's great-grandfather who lived in or near Grafton, where he died; and Miss Ludgate added, her forefathers all had lived to a good old age.

"On their father's side the present owners are descended from a Southerner, at one time head-keeper on the Ashbridge Park Estate at Great Berkhamstead belonging to Lord Brownlow; their father was Station-master at Castle Ashby, who had married Miss Smith, of Grafton Regis, Northamptonshire, the daughter of a farmer-stock.

¹ The first Duke of Grafton was the son of Charles II. by Barbara Villiers. Grafton Manor was presented to him by his father in the latter part of the 17th Century.

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"On his retirement from the Railway Service, Mr. Ludgate settled at Winston-on-Tees, and when he died his widow took over the license of 'The Bridgewater Arms,' which duly devolved on the daughters.¹

"When Mrs. Ludgate (née Smith) brought the picture into the family, her husband regarded it with so much pride and veneration that he spoke of it as an heirloom, but it may be explained, it is not strictly so regarded by his daughters."

Further, on page 98, we read that a large photograph of the portrait was taken. He goes on to say :—

"This photograph was forwarded without loss of time, with an expression of the desire that I should give my opinion upon it. To that I replied that, judging merely from the photograph—for a photograph is always an uncertain and sometimes a treacherous guide—the picture appeared to me to be an interesting one, and, as far as I could then tell, a genuine painting of the time to which it apparently belongs. But as to its claim to be a likeness of the poet, I could not say a word. . . . To describe the picture. It is painted on panel, and measures $17\frac{1}{4}$ by $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This panel is of oak of undoubted antiquity, not planed, of course, but hewn at the back, and to some extent worm-eaten. In the upper left and right corners is painted in raised yellow letters

¹ "The Inn, we are told, owes its name to the fact that the Manor of Winston passed into the possession of Scrope Egerton, Duke of Bridgewater, on the execution of Henry Scrope for high treason against Henry the Fifth."—*The Connoisseur*, Feb., 1909. Fol. 97.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PORTRAIT

(doubtless formed of gesso or heavy impasto of paint)
the following inscription:—

“Æ SVÆ, 24, 1588.”

A shock of curly hair, dark-brown to blackish, covers the head, and falls down to the base of the neck. The slashed doublet is of crimson or carnation colour, good in tone, but unusual in a garment of the period. The painting of it, and of the gauze collar are vastly inferior in merit to the head, so that it may be believed that the painter of the face left the execution of the ‘drapery’ to a pupil, according to the fashion which was then common enough, and which was openly practised down to the beginning of the last century. The head is well and incisively drawn, and the character good, suggesting the hand of a follower of Holbein, Bettes, or Stephen, or some other Netherlandish or English painter of that class—of an artist too sensitive to have left so crudely the obtrusive crosslines of the collar and the slashings of the doublet without seeking to modify or soften the effect. But in fairness to the picture it must be stated that the glazings, if such there had been, may well have been removed during the rigorous cleaning which the late Mrs. Ludgate once administered to it according to the strictest rules of hygienic effectiveness and propriety, with soda and scrubbing brush. The nose is thick, especially towards the end, without the marked *columna nasi* common to the Stratford bust and the other leading portraits of repute, and the nostrils are of essentially different shape to what we find in the Droeshout print, which, however, it curiously resembles

in two not unimportant particulars. The medial lobe of the upper lip dips in exaggerated fashion in the middle, at what might be called the inverted apex of the Cupid's bow, and the curve of the lower lip towards the left ends abruptly, rising in an almost perpendicular line to the upper lip—exactly as we see in the Ely Palace and the Flower (the so-called 'Droeshout Original') portrait. It also agrees with the Ely Palace portrait and the 'unique proof' of the Droeshout engraving in the character of the small moustache, and further with the last-named in the curviform construction of the eyebrows.

. . . Much has been made of the fact that on the back of the stretcher there is branded 'W + S.' That is something more than the '1616' which, scratched on the back of the 'Death Mask' of Shakespeare, is considered by some to be satisfactory, if only partial evidence of its authenticity. But even supposing that the mark were contemporaneous there is nothing to suggest that it did not refer to some Walter Smith or William Salisbury. As a matter of fact, this sunken device is quite modern. For when Miss Ludgate had the courtesy to bring the picture for me to examine, she told me, and confirmed to me in writing, that she remembers her father branding on the letters himself, remarking that inasmuch as the portrait evidently represented Shakespeare he might as well set it upon record for the guidance of future owners. His act was thus committed in good faith, and not in any-wise for the purpose of deception.

"When it was that the picture was first called by the name of the poet there is nothing to show. . . . It had

THE RAISED FIGURES

always been known by tradition in the family of the owners as ‘Old Matt,’¹ a name which has not even yet forsaken it. Although it is a genuine old portrait in the dry manner of the period, smoothly painted, it is without clearly defined shadows ; that is to say, it is allied to Zuccaro’s earlier manner, and of that of Mark Gerrard. These shadows are needful to give solidity and projection, and the quality which Mr. Berenson calls ‘tactile values,’ and the absence of them is characteristic of portraits painted, roughly speaking, down to the end of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. . . . It is true that raised lettering, which is the hall-mark of several exploded Shakespeare portraits, in itself provides an element of doubt; but, in this case I believe it to be genuine enough.”

It is hardly possible to speak too highly of the acumen and the delicate discrimination shown in this examination and report.

With reference to what the writer of the article calls the “ raised lettering ” there is one matter which is not noticed by him, namely, that under the figure “ 4 ” of the “ 24 ” there is the trace of an effaced “ 3,” which seems to show that the artist commenced the portrait before or in April, 1588, when Shakespeare was 23 years of age, and that it was completed after he had passed his 24th birthday in the same year, hence the altera-

¹ It was so called for the reason that a local character Matt. Blunt wore a collar similar to that in the portrait. This may be an illustration of the persistence of fashion in country districts.

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tion which one would hardly think to be necessary, except it be that, as a young man, the sitter may have desired that he should not be thought younger than he was.

The writer of the preceding interesting analysis disclaims any responsibility for the sensational reports made upon the picture, and also gives reasons for his personal objections. These will be dealt with in proper sequence.

As to the portrait itself ; the scars on the face are ancient scars, the pitted holes are not recent, the art is excellent art, and the worm-eaten parts are not sophisticated. The date upon it is genuine, and the panel is of the quality and character in use at the period.

As to its value as a likeness the observer must be the judge after making due allowance for the effect of exposure, unprotected by glass during the 326 years that have elapsed since it was painted, under the harshness of our trying and variable climate and the neglect and maltreatment by its ignorant owners.

No other portrait of Shakespeare at so early an age is known ; in fact, the only one at any period, and that was a late one, of his life for which authenticity can be claimed is the "Droeshout" engraving which Ben Jonson has stamped with his *fiat* as being a likeness.

As in the analysis of any organic or inorganic body many considerations have to be thought out

PANEL AND CANVAS PAINTING

before the dissociation of the elements can be attempted, so it must be in such a composite matter as this picture.

It is painted on an oak panel which had previously been smoothed and prepared by priming for the artist, as was the common manner of the time. It was only after 1600 that the Italian fashion of painting on canvas came into England, and this revolutionised to a certain extent the manner of it. This will be readily understood by a consideration of the two surfaces —the one of canvas, with partial but regular interstices, and the other of close-grained irregular woody fibre smoothed to a fine and delicate level.

This smoothed wooden panel was first of all primed with an oil preparation or with egg albumen mixed with a white pigment to form the ground work, and this was afterwards rubbed down with pumice or other method of attrition, the same being renewed again and again if needed until a suitable surface for the reception of paint was formed and it had become dry and hard.

It is upon such a surface that the “Grafton” portrait has been painted, and it is one capable of receiving touches and tones of the utmost delicacy and nicety.

A canvas picture such as the “Chandos” portrait has first to be surcharged with priming and allowed to dry. Its smoothness has to be

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made by the adroit use of a brush or the soft priming flattened by a palette knife, or by scraping. The “Chandos” portrait has been heavily primed, and whether it is an original portrait or not, it seems to have had its surface repainted at some later period—maybe by such an artist as Dobson, and from the fact that it is on canvas it must have been painted after 1600.

The National Portrait Gallery serves a useful purpose in affording examples of the varying methods of artistic creation, and some of the portraits by Holbein, Mireveldt, Gerrard, &c., make many modern artists envious of their great beauty and continued freshness. It is truly wonderful to observe how well they have been preserved. The regret is that the “Grafton” portrait should have been carelessly kept and ignorantly maltreated. For 320 years it has been without covering. For a long period it was kept in the secret chamber of an old farmhouse, after which it hung in the best bedroom. In the process of whitewashing the room it has evidently been splashed with lime, which has burnt through the paint down to the woodwork below.

One is strongly tempted to fill up these pits, to restore a few lights and take out some scratches ; but that would rob the observer of the deductions he could make or inductions he could form which are common to all intelligences. The simplest plan would be to make an emendation upon a



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photographic reproduction only and to leave the painting untouched.

There is one curious fact in regard to old pictures painted on wooden panels—the ligneous fibre of which they are composed is never absolutely dead. There is a life in it which sometimes raises little knots or excrescences. Oak is the most liable of all woods to twist, as the beams, roofs, and floors of old houses bear witness, and hence these vagaries of old oak, upon which a white priming is superimposed, give rise to peculiarities which often deceive experts, some of whom have imagined that there is a “3” under the last figure “8.” This deceptive appearance having led some to doubt the authenticity of the picture, the opinion of qualified experts in several branches of Art are given in the Appendix¹ to show that under the figure “8” there never was painted a “3” or any other figure. Surface streaks or scratches, of which there are many on the “Grafton” portrait, are from external abrasions.

A distinguished art critic asked if there was not to be noticed some lines which seemed to take the form of a hood. There are external inscribed scratches or cuts which may be construed into that form, but these marks are, on a mere superficial observation, found to be cut in the varnish and some of them seem to be bruised as if by the end of a scrubbing-brush or the grit in a sponge. In

¹ See Appendix IV., page 79.

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the course of time these scratches have become filled with dust or dirt, and so are apparent on the first photograph, but they wholly disappeared on passing a soft wet rag or sponge over the picture, the dirt accumulated since the application of Mrs. Ludgate's brush being thus easily removed. The *frontispiece* photograph was taken while the surface was rendered smooth and clear by means of a wet sponge. It must be noticed that the moisture on the surface also acts as a varnish to the picture, causing many things to be seen which are not otherwise visible, as the hair, &c.

We must now try to find the name of the unknown artist by the characteristics of this picture, which may be similar to those of pictures by known artists. As for instance, it is not difficult to recognise the unsigned work of artists of the present day from the form, the quality of colour, method of work, whether of figure, landscape, or a combination of both, and the treatment in pose, background, and style, or from the subject matter of it. Thus, it is easy to tell a Millet from a Millais or a Tadema from a Herkomer.

Confining oneself to portraiture as exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery, Vandyke gives one type or style, Sir Peter Lely another, Hogarth another, and Gainsborough is different again. Some special individual quality or style is to be found in every artistic work of mark ; each artist



KING JAMES I.

COLOUR SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR, FROM THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

OCHRE AND SIENNA

sets his own type so to speak—mixes his own colour upon his own palette, and also makes his own style of background.

Now, there are many ways of painting portraits, as well as having them painted—for instance, a well-known Bey of Cairo, head of the Survey Department, sent for Signor Scognamiglio, an Italian artist, when as a holder of the Grand Prix de Rome, he was working in Egypt.

On the painter's appearance, he called in his head Surveyor, and said to him : “ This gentleman is here to paint my portrait and as I have many engagements I want you to take the measurements of my face, so that he can go on with his work. You will measure the nose, chin, mouth, forehead, eyes, and ears, height of the whole, with any other particulars he may desire.” Needless to say the painter had to persuade the Bey to sit and allow him to take his own measurements.

It is an old axiom in painting that any portrait can be realised by the aid of three colours—red, blue, and yellow—and of each colour there are many kinds. Painters of the modern school use ochre for their yellow effects, with rose-madder and light or other reds, and some kind of green, blue, or black for their greys and shadows. In the time of Elizabeth and that of James I. there was a painter, or a school of painters, who preferred to use raw sienna earth for the yellow, and burnt sienna with combinations of light red or carmine

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to produce the ruddy effect. In the National Portrait Gallery there are some remarkable examples of these two qualities of painture. The portrait of Sir Horace Vere, No. 818, is of the yellow-ochre type, and immediately adjacent is the portrait of Arthur Hildersham, No. 1575, of the Sienna type, painter unknown.

An example of the first character, of what may be called the yellow-ochre type, may also be seen in the “Chandos” portrait of Shakespeare, which is painted on canvas and from outward appearance is of a later date than the portrait of James I. of England, No. 549. This portrait of King James is peculiarly an example of the raw and burnt sienna style of portraiture, as is that of Arthur Hildersham, and the “Grafton” portrait is of a similar class, nature, and quality of colour. The name of the artist does not seem to be known ; but it may be accepted that these two portraits and that of the “Grafton” Shakespeare are of one school if by different artists.

But what can be said of the “Grafton” portrait itself ? It is dated 1588, in which year we have unquestionable evidence that Shakespeare had reached the age of 24 years, the age recorded on the portrait. It has been asked how came he to have his portrait painted at so early an age ? The answer to this question is perfectly simple. Let it be conceded that at all times in the history



THE "CHANDOS" PORTRAIT

COLOUR SKETCH BY THE AUTHOR, FROM THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

of portrait painting it has been necessary for an artist to practise his craft freely with a view to acquiring facility and efficiency in his work before he can hope to be entrusted with the execution of more important commissions. So it may readily be conceived of this "Grafton" panel that it was a studio picture—a portrait done without fee or reward, merely in exercise of the painter's craft, or, it may be, a specimen work for exhibition to wealthy patrons with a view to securing commissions of a remunerative character.

One may be permitted to imagine such a portrait being taken by the artist to the Court, or to the chambers of the nobility. If it was taken to the Court of James I., it is conceivable that the thrifty monarch might retain it, and probably commission his own portrait to be painted by the same artist or one of the same school.

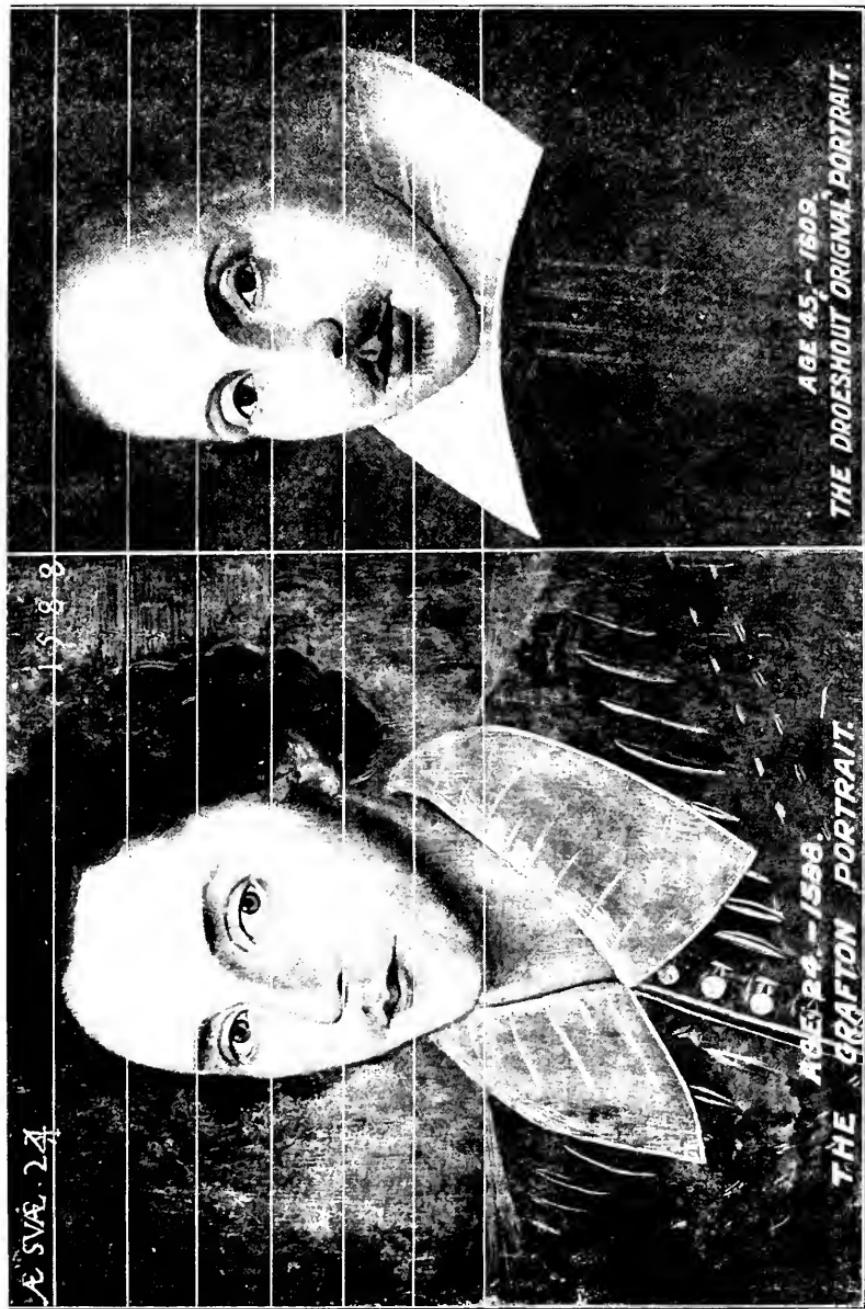
Again, the shadowless portrait faces are peculiar to the Elizabethan era. It may not have been generally observed that the Virgin Queen never had a shadow painted on her face. It interfered with the purity of her complexion, and perhaps, as she may have thought, her character. Looking in a mirror at one's own face in direct light these shadows are hardly discernible, hence a greater delicacy of art was required in painting a portrait at that period than at the present day,

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when strongly shadowed Rembrandtesque effects are more in vogue.

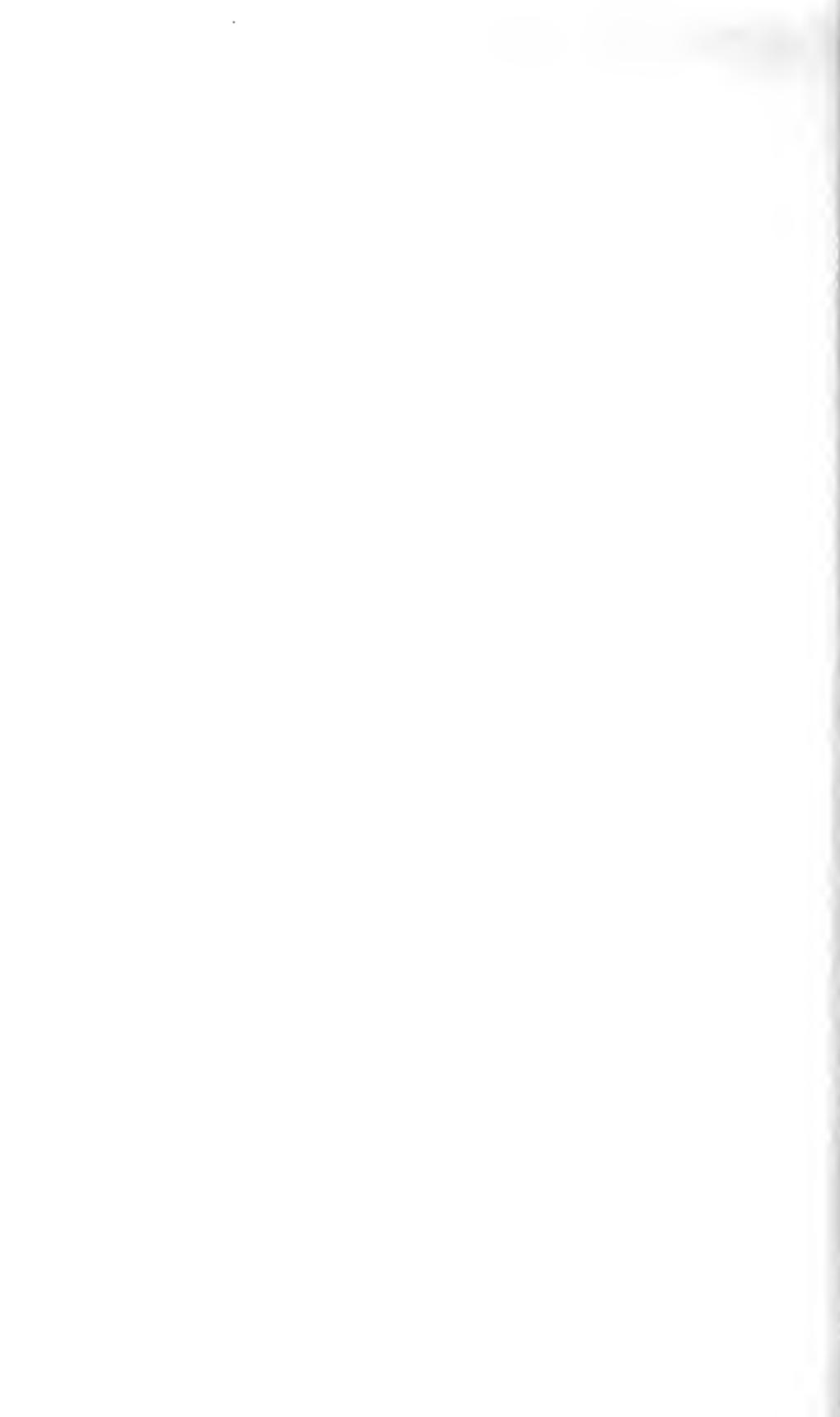
In the “Grafton” portrait we have this Elizabethan fashion depicted, except that the chin is relieved by a shadow below and traces of a slight beard near the ear. This shadowless face gives an appearance of greater width to the end of the nose by reason of the right subjective lobe being merged into it, while the want of prominence is caused by the lighted surface having been removed either by time's decay or by Mrs. Ludgate's cleansing process. A very slight touch of light upon the nasal column to replace that which is lost affords a rather exaggerated but effectual restoration, as is shown in the accompanying parallel-lined photographs.

With reference to the much-debated subject of Shakespeare's portraits there are several characteristics that have come to be recognised as appertaining to them. They must all be judged by the standard established by the only one upon which full reliance can be placed, which represents Shakespeare in his later days. This is the “Droeshout” engraving in the First Folio Edition of his Plays published in 1623. Shakespeare died in 1616. The lines written by Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's personal friend, testify to the truth of the likeness in the portraiture, poor and unflattering as that portrait is.



COMPARISON LINED PHOTOGRAPHS

A careful measurement of the "Grafton" portrait with that of the "Droeshout original" reveals the fact that the spaces between the chin and mouth, the mouth and nose, the eyes and the crown of the head, &c., are absolutely identical.



“ This figure that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the graver had a strife
With Nature, to out-do the life.
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brasse as he hath hit
His face, the print would then surpassee
All that was ever writ in brasse;
But since he cannot, reader, looke,
Not on his picture, but his booke.”

There is another portrait, known as the “ Flower ” portrait, the so-called “ original ” photograph (No. 4) from which it is believed that the “ Droeshout ” engraving was made. These two portraits, which are almost facsimiles of each other, stand for comparison with all others in existence.

The parallel pictures of the “ Grafton ” portrait and the “ Droeshout ” original are presented side by side so that a comparison of the features may be made—the one of a young man 24 years of age, fair and unwrinkled ; the other, 21 years later, 45 years of age, fully expanded. It cannot be difficult, when one considers the effect of age in rounding the features—before old age attenuates them, to gauge its results, and to realise whether the younger man was likely

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to grow into the older one, or whether the older could in his youth have looked like the younger.

By some the monumental bust is another accepted likeness, but Dugdale, whose “History of Warwickshire” was published in 1656, gives an illustration of it in which the features are unlike those now represented in the existing bust. There are also other differences justifying an impression that possibly the present bust may not be the original, and therefore has no right to be accepted as a true representation of Shakespeare.

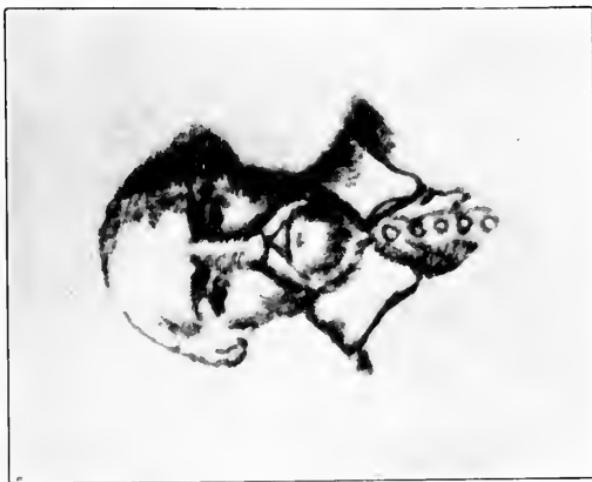
Mr. W. Salt Brassington has, however, compared other engravings or illustrations in Dugdale’s history with photographs of the original monuments, and shows that the historian was not entirely trustworthy in such matters.

Mrs. C. C. Stopes has written a carefully compiled history¹ of the changes made in the bust so far as they are known, including its repair in 1748 and a repainting in colour by Mr. John Hall ; also of a removal from the pedestal so that Malone might take a cast from it. It seems probable that an accident then removed a part of the nose, the restoration of which, according to Mrs. Stopes, has left the long upper lip a marvel to many.

In 1793 Malone disapproved of the colours that had been used upon the bust, and persuaded the Corporation to have it painted white, where-

¹ “The True Story of the Stratford Bust.”

No. 1



THE BUST
ENSLARGED FROM DUGDALE'S "WARWICKSHIRE"

No. 2



THE BUST
IN STRATFORD-UPON-AVON CHURCH



THE “DROESHOUT”

upon a wit of the period wrote in the Album at the Church of Stratford-upon-Avon :—

“Stranger to whom this monument is shewn
Invoke the Poet’s curse upon Malone,
Whose meddling zeal his barbarous taste displays
And daubs his tombstone as he marred his plays.”

In 1861 the bust was repainted in its original colours by the artist who discovered what has been called “The Droeshout original portrait,” now reverently preserved at The Memorial Theatre. As the artist who drew the “Droeshout” engraving is said to have been only 15 years of age when Shakespeare died, some doubt may be permitted as to the picture having been drawn from life.

Many portraits of the poet have been produced by engravers for the publishers of various editions of Shakespeare’s works. Mention may also be made of some forgeries by Zincke, which were exposed in a book published in 1827 by Mr. Wiville, of Birmingham (probably a descendant of the ancient Wyvilles of Grafton House), and the information gleaned therefrom indicates that many of the old pictures, of which there is no authentic history, are fanciful or careless copies.

The portraits known as the “Chandos,” the “Ely,” the “Stratford,” the “Felton,” and others, varying as they do in dress, style, &c., are all of

THE “GRAFTON” SHAKESPEARE

great value although their pedigrees are not perfect.

It is also to be remembered that at the great Fire of London, which occurred only half a century after Shakespeare's death, many relics and portraits of him would be destroyed, whilst those in the country would stand a better chance of preservation, the more so if by State disruptions and consequent change of possessors, their identity for the time being should have been lost.

It is worthy of notice that the portrait of Ben Jonson (No. 363, National Portrait Gallery), which was formerly hung alongside that of the “Chandos” Shakespeare, has been obviously “touched up” by the replacement of perished high lights.

After the quality of the painting of the “Grafton” portrait the next consideration is the character of it. We know that with age the forehead becomes flatter and that the signs of premature baldness are usually first observable in the retreat of the hair from it, although sometimes the first sign is seen on the crown of the head, where it gradually widens until the clerical tonsure is developed. In all the portraits of Shakespeare this denudation of the hair from the forehead is a distinctive mark as it is in that of the poet Tennyson.

The physiognomy as revealed in the “Grafton” portrait may now be considered. In the first

place the shape of the head is a long oval, and in this respect it resembles the “Droeshout” portrait, being evenly balanced and well set up, with eyes of an open liquid character which could be either fiery or languishing. The ears are set well back, leaving a noble forehead and plenty of mental equipment in front.

The eyes have been set by the painter to secure the result of seeming to follow the spectator from every point of view—a simple artistic effect obtained by making the model gaze steadfastly into the face of the artist when painting the pupils of the eyes and by adding the glistening light thereon. Traces of these still appear in the portrait, although under time and rough usage they have almost disappeared.

The mouth seems to smile, but suggests withal the presence of a serious and thoughtful disposition. The nose, as it appears in the picture, is narrow on the bridge, like that in the “Droeshout” painting, but broader at the tip. This apparent bluntness is entirely due to the absence of the high light which would give it prominence and elevation.

There can be no doubt but that this high light was formerly present in the picture, and its disappearance is entirely due either to the ravages of time, or to the severe cleansing it is known to have received. There is, indeed, upon minute obser-

THE “GRAFTON” SHAKESPEARE

vation, a clear indication of this light still to be found on the portrait. It is also worthy of note that the human nose is, as a rule, much more full and fleshy in youth than in later life. This fact is pathetically noted by Shakespeare in describing the death of Falstaff, of whom Dame Quickly says : “ I knew there was but one way ; *for his nose was as sharp as a pen*, and a babbled of green fields.”

The collar and the dress, which latter is a slashed doublet, are of an elegant and sumptuous quality, but rather bizarre.

Polonius says :—

**“Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express’d in fancy; rich, not gaudy,
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous sheaf in that.”**

It may possibly be that the dress is a fancy costume, and it might be a character-dress appertaining to a masque, a court function, or a stage play. Consideration must also be given to the fact that in Elizabeth’s day a person was clad according to his quality or station in life, just as a clergyman, the sailor, the waiter, &c., are known to-day by the fashion of their raiment.

Let us consider also the position Shakespeare would occupy in the year of grace 1588, having arrived in London in 1582 at 18 years of age. Six years after his arrival he was a member of the Earl

of Leicester's Company of Players and under the protection of the great Earl's name he is certain to have filled no inconspicuous niche in the temple of that little world of art and letters. He was a youth of remarkable poetic gifts rising into celebrity and possessed, as we see from his portraits, of an attractive appearance. To whom would he be more likely to recite his verses than to the nobles, wits, artists, actors and others who were drawn towards that gay Bohemian world ?

His genial disposition would commend him to the notice of the scholars and travellers of the day, for we find that Ben Jonson and Lord Southampton were among his earlier associates. Business capacity would enable him at an early period to lay the foundation of the fortune that eventually made him the wealthiest man in his native town.

A wonderful gift of mental illustration, a power of expression, the poetic faculty, a wide knowledge of field and flood, and a tender grasp and faculty of understanding and comprehension would make him not only a most charming companion but a beloved friend. He revelled in description, the beauties of heaven and earth were an open book which he could read with facility and render to admiration. Once known, he would never be forgotten. All studios would be open to him and artists would be proud to try a sketch of his face. It is unlikely that he would long escape the attention of portrait painters.

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Such may have been the circumstances under which this “Grafton” portrait was produced. It may have been painted on an old used panel with the original subject erased—for economical artists do these things—and some, to my knowledge, prefer old canvases to paint upon because of their prepared condition, and it is the same with wooden panels, the pores being more completely and firmly filled.

It is not difficult to imagine Shakespeare on a summer’s day at “The Falcon,” “The Three Cranes,” or other inn, overlooking the river, with Ben Jonson, Richard Burbage, Alleyn, Heming, Will Sly, with “face-painters”—artists from the Netherlands—Van Somers to wit, and others sojourning in Merry England, discussing the news of the defeat and dispersal of the Spanish Armada. One can almost hear the merry jests and the joke of Sir Julius Cæsar, “*Venit, vidit, fugit*” (which was afterwards struck on a medal), and young Will. Shakespeare sitting quietly observant and mentally noting details of the ruin of the enemy’s fleet—as recounted by a mariner who had served under Drake, Hawkins, or Effingham in their memorable Channel fight; “his complexion is perfect gallows,” as Gonzalo says of the Boatswain in “*The Tempest*.”

The call of the pot-boy “Anon! Anon!” with scurrying steps and clashing pewters, the arrivals and departures, the wherries and their

owners—State barges and officials—jugglers and dancing girls, with the pets of the ring, *et hoc genus omne*; and there was the Puritan Preacher, John Field, who railed at them upon the iniquities of Bankside, its lewdness, riotings, and degradation of the Sabbath. He wrote “a Godly exhortation by occasion of the late judgment of God shewed at Paris Garden” upon the occasion of a great accident which had happened in that place of assembly. John Field was the father of Nathan or Nat Field—who afterwards became an actor of some prominence, and whose portrait is in the Dulwich Gallery along with that of Richard Burbage, William Sly, and others of the stage.

To revert to the distinguished writer and critic previously quoted. He says :

“It must be borne in mind that the painting of a man’s portrait was a serious thing in the sixteenth century; nobles and men of wealth and leisure would indulge themselves in it and persons of mark and learning would sit to ‘face drawers’ and ‘face makers’ for their portraits. But what was Shakespeare’s position at the time? Why should he, who held some inferior, perhaps, as we are told, a ‘servile’ position at a play-house—none too reputable a place in the consideration of contemporary society—have been honored by the artist’s attention? We know nothing of him at that date: not for four years, in 1592, was he to be heard of so far as dramatic history reveals. Likely enough he had not yet arisen above the situation of call boy. Is it credible

THE “GRAFTON” SHAKESPEARE

that an obscure youth, occupied in a vocation more or less inglorious, should have been honored by a painter of ability in a manner usually reserved for men and women of position or established reputation?”—*Connoisseur*, Feb. 1909, p. 100.

The answer to these questions is that there is no trustworthy record of Shakespeare having in 1588 occupied a servile position at a play-house, or that “he had not risen above the situation of call-boy” if he ever had been one.

This allusion to Shakespeare’s inferior position in the play-house is probably founded upon two of the least trustworthy traditions relating to his early days in London. The first reference to this particular tradition was published in the year 1753 in “Cibber’s Lives of the Poets of Great Britain,” in which is related a story “which Sir William Davenant told to Mr. Betterton, who communicated it to Mr. Rowe; Rowe told it to Mr. Pope, and Mr. Pope told it to Dr. Newton, the late editor of Milton, and from a gentleman who heard it from him ‘tis here related’ to the effect that ‘Shakespeare driven to the last necessity went to the play-house door and picked up a little money by taking care of the gentlemen’s horses who came to the play.’”

The other tradition, although it has reached us by a less circuitous route than that just related, is still more untrustworthy, and appears in a letter, supposed to have been written by one John Dowdall, in 1693, in which it is stated that he

SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY PROMINENCE

was informed by “the clarke that shewd me this church (**Stratford-upon-Avon**) . . . that this Shakespeare was formerly in this Towne bound apprentice to a butcher; but that he run from his master to London and there was received into the play-house as a serviture.”

Mr. J. W. Gray pronounces this letter to be one of Collier’s numerous forgeries, probably suggested by a reading of the tradition that passed through so many mouths before it reached Cibber.¹ Moreover, the term “servile” as applied to Shakespeare’s early occupation at the theatre is hardly justified by the word “servitude” used in the Dowdall forgery. It must be noted that a servitor is one who receives a free tuition in return for some perhaps menial duties, and is not a paid servant.

Moreover, it is quite probable that in 1588 Shakespeare, having arrived in London in 1582, had already become prominent on the Stage, and that he occupied a position equal to that of some contemporary actors whose portraits now grace the walls of Dulwich Gallery.² There is no justification to be found in the annals of Art for the theory that at any period no face would be

¹ “Shakespeare’s Marriage and Departure from Stratford,” pp. 82 and 250-1.

² Vide catalogue of the pictures in the Gallery of Alleyn’s College of God’s Gift at Dulwich. 385 (50) Nathan Field, an actour. 390 (52) Tom Bond, an actour. 391 (49) William Sly, an actour. 395 (48) Richard Burbage, actour. 411 (31) Young Mr. Cartwright, actour. 443 (11) Edward Alleyn, actour.

THE "GRAFTON" SHAKESPEARE

"honored by the artist's attention which had not a reputable place in the consideration of contemporary society."

Dr. Furnival tells us that in 1592 Shakespeare was well known as "both actor and author,"¹ and in the same year, four years after the date of the portrait, he is of sufficient importance to be attacked by Green in his "Groat's worth of wit."

Before elaborating this argument it will, perhaps, be well to give an account of the main events of Shakespeare's life.

¹ "Life and Works of Shakespeare," Fol. 176-7.



FACTS OF SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

A CHRONICLE.

1564. } Baptism, "Gulielmus Filius Johannes Shaks-
April 26. } pere."

1582. } A licence was granted for the marriage of
Nov. 27. } William Shaxpere and Anne Whateley
(evidently a mistake for Hathaway) of
Temple Grafton. Bishop Whitgift's
Register, folio 43b.—*Diocesan Registry,*
Worcester.

1582. } A bond was executed for the grant of a Marriage
Nov. 28. } Licence to William Shagspere, and Anne
Hathwey of Stratford upon Avon.—
Diocesan Registry, Worcester.

1582. Aubrey's date of Shakespeare's departure from
Stratford.

1583. } Baptism, "Susanna daughter to William Shaks-
May 26. } pere."

1584-5. } Baptisms, "Hamnet and Judeth, sonne and
Feb. 2. } daughter to Willia Shakspere."

1585-7. Shakespeare wrote "Venus and Adonis."

1588-9. Shakespeare wrote "Titus Andronicus," "Love's
Labour's Lost."

1603. } Under a Warrant from King James I, Shakes-
May 17. } peare's Company of players received a
licence "freely to use and exercise the arte
and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies,
&c." The names mentioned are Laurence
Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard
Burbage, Augustine Phillipes, John Hem-
mings, Henrie Condell, William Sly, Robert
Armyn, and Richard Cowlye.—*Public
Record Office Museum.*

1616. } William Shakespeare's last will and testament
March 25. } bears this date.

1616. } William Shakespeare died.
April 23. }
April 25. Burial, "Will. Shakespere, gent."

THE “GRAFTON” SHAKESPEARE

Commenting upon the period immediately following Shakespeare's marriage in 1582, Rowe says :

“In this kind of settlement he continued *for some time* until an extravagance that he was guilty of forced him both out of his country and the way of living he had taken up.”¹

It has been the custom of nearly all the poet's biographers to form their opinions as to the date of his departure from Stratford, upon Rowe's indefinite expression “*for some time*,” which is interpreted by Halliwell Phillips as “three or four years after his union with Anne Hathaway,” a rendering for which there is no justification in any of the known facts of Shakespeare's life.

This and other similar readings of Rowe's words are supposed to receive support from the fact that Shakespeare's twin children, Hamnet and Judeth, were baptised at Stratford-upon-Avon, in February, 1584-5; but the force of this argument is much discounted by the consideration that the poet when residing in London could, with little difficulty, have visited his native town even if circumstances had compelled him to walk the whole distance.

Other authors suggest dates as late as 1588 for the commencement of Shakespeare's residence

¹ “*The Works of William Shakespeare.*” Rowe, 1709. It should be noted that Rowe wrote at a later period than Aubrey, and that his account therefore is of less value.

A U B R E Y ' S A C C O U N T

in London, and appear to ignore the opinion of the poet's earliest biographer, Aubrey, who, in the few words he bestows upon the subject, says :

"This William . . . came to London I guesse about 18; and was an actor at one of the play houses."¹

Although Aubrey uses the words "I guesse," it will be seen that his evidence is of great value and cannot be disregarded.

He visited Stratford-upon-Avon within 50 years of the poet's death, and the results of his inquiries created in his mind the impression which he thus interprets.

There are, fortunately, still in existence sources from which Aubrey's guess receives corroboration, and those who are curious about the matter may refer to Mr. J. W. Gray's "Shakespeare's Marriage and Departure from Stratford," pp. 70-96, in which the evidence is dealt with at some length in support of his contention that the poet was installed as an actor in London in or about the year 1582. This indicates that he had been pursuing his avocation in London for six years at the time the "Grafton" portrait was painted (1588).

The poem of "Venus and Adonis" and some of the earlier plays are ascribed by Dr. Furnival, one of the most trustworthy of Shakespearean writers, to the same year. If the view be taken that he left Stratford in 1582 it will be perceived

¹ *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries*, Aubrey, 1669-1696.

THE “GRAFTON” SHAKESPEARE

that he had abundant opportunity of devoting himself to his work, and it harmonises with a view founded upon another of Aubrey's statements, derived from Beeston, that Shakespeare “**understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country.**”

The year 1582 brought the son of the Warwickshire yeoman to the turning point in his career. He then married, and it is almost certain that about the same time he also made the other great change that led him to fame and fortune, for it cannot be doubted that residence in London supplied the environment that enabled him to make full use of two qualities seldom found in combination—genius and great business capacity.

The circumstances connected with the grant of the marriage license, the records of which are still preserved in the muniment-room of the Episcopal Registry at Worcester, indicate considerable haste in the preparations for the ceremony. It was evidently inconvenient to wait until the banns had been published in the ordinary manner, and it cannot reasonably be supposed that the expense and trouble involved in obtaining a license, allowing of one proclamation of banns at the time of the ceremony, were lightly undertaken by a youth whose father, although a former bailiff of the town, was then in financial difficulties.

A hurried departure from Stratford is held to have been the motive for that costly procedure.

An offence against the Game Laws that aroused the ire of Sir Thomas Lucy finds considerable favour as the prime cause, and it does not seem improbable that youthful exuberance led him into some difficulty that brought his residence at Stratford to a sudden close.

The marriage took place late in November, 1582, and the first child of the union was baptised in May, 1583, within six months of the marriage. This short interval points to a desire on Shakespeare's part to do that which is not uncommon even at the present day, viz., "to make an honest woman" of Anne under their contract of marriage. This was quite an ordinary mode of procedure in and before the time of Queen Elizabeth.

Having incurred marital responsibilities, it became an urgent necessity that he should at once seek his fortune.

The cumulative evidence now available corroborates Aubrey's "guess" that at the age of 18 Shakespeare commenced his life as an actor in London, and we may feel assured that he made good use of such opportunities as were no doubt afforded by a long acquaintance with the members of the travelling companies of players who frequently visited Stratford. That he was not without friends in London from the first is also certain from what we know about the Stratford men who were already settled there and who would

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readily advance the interests of their talented townsman.

It is therefore submitted that Shakespeare had already made his mark as an actor in 1588, and that this, together with his social and financial position, entitled him to the honour of sitting to “a painter of ability,” in like manner to his confrères of the stage, Nat Field and the rest. The evidence, such as it is, favours the assumption that instead of being the suitor for such favours, he was far more likely to have been in a position to bestow them.

By way of summary, it may be said that the statements by the former owners of the “Grafton” portrait are genuine, and testimony is given as to the transparent honesty and good faith that has stood the test of all investigations. While the grounds upon which the picture is claimed to be a portrait of Shakespeare may be considered a worthy subject of inquiry, its past history is not without significance.

It has long been adrift from its former association with other pictures, but it has been traced with some approach to success, as may be found by reading the chapter upon Grafton Regis. The lost identity of the picture may be readily understood when it is considered that after the restoration of King Charles II. he would have been a bold man and a foolish one who would allow it to be known that plunder taken from Grafton House

was in his possession. For this reason it is extremely unlikely that the Duke of Grafton ever saw it, hidden away as it was in the Secret Chamber of a farmhouse. Even if the “Grafton” picture had previously been known as the portrait of an actor, puritanical prejudice would have prevented any mention of the fact, and it would gradually sink into an oblivion to be still further deepened by its later vicissitudes until not only the identity of the portrait, but the circumstances under which it was acquired by the ancestor of the late owner would be completely lost, and so the habit of keeping the picture hidden from public view survived after the motive for secrecy was forgotten.

On the other hand, we have the circumstances already stated, including the general agreement of the features in the “Grafton” portrait with those of the “Droeshout original,” and the coincidence of the age of the man represented with that of Shakespeare in the year painted on the panel.

“Æ SVÆ 24, 1588.”

There is also the denudation of the high lights from the picture, and in particular from the nose. Without these lights it loses the natural projection or elevation which is common to the reputed portraits of the poet.

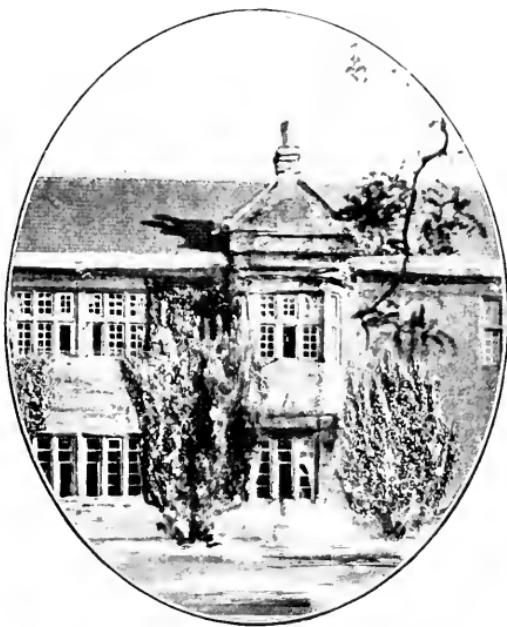
The great changes in appearance brought about by the transition from youth to middle age, combined with those imposed by fashion in dress,

THE "GRAFTON" SHAKESPEARE

explain the difference between the "Grafton" and the "Droeshout original" and other portraits of Shakespeare.

If the "Droeshout" picture truly represents Shakespeare, his face had no claim to beauty in his later years, and whatever share of that quality he may have possessed in his youth seems to be discernible in the "Grafton." The skull is the same as that of the "Droeshout original," covered with a full complement of expanding flesh.

In the foregoing pages the claims of the "Grafton" picture to a place among the portraits of Shakespeare, and therefore to careful preservation, are based mainly upon internal evidence. In the next chapter these claims will be supported by tracing the history of the picture to a former connection with the Manor House of Grafton Regis, and by a description of the tragic circumstances in which it probably came into the possession of an ancestor of its late owners.



VIEW FROM LAWN OF THE PRESENT
GRAFTON HOUSE

III.

GRAFTON REGIS



III.

GRAFTON REGIS

Alas ! for the erstwhile favourites of Fortune—

“ They perish as a robe outworn
As faded leaves they float away.”

Such reflections are inevitable when the magnificent Eleanor Cross meets the eye about a mile south of Northampton on the London Road which leads by Grafton Regis to Stony Stratford.¹

This pious relic of a regal love is one of the three remaining crosses erected by King Edward I. to commemorate the resting-places of the procession which brought the body of his beloved Queen Eleanor from Harby in Nottinghamshire to Westminster. For upwards of six hundred years the Cross has stood sentinel by the roadside, and it remains to this day a glorious relic of antiquity in a splendid state of preservation. The steps at its base form a pleasant resting-place for the weary traveller, and the broken pillar of the Cross seems a fitting emblem of the vanity of human things. This monument has seen the rise and fall of many kings, and if a panorama of its passers-by could be painted, what a strange picture would appear—itinerant monks and hedge priests, swashbucklers, play-actors, and charlatans ; kings and peasants and nobles, knights and dames with their servants, these and many others have swept by on their journeys between

¹ In the compilation of this part I have to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Mr. Tinsley Pratt.

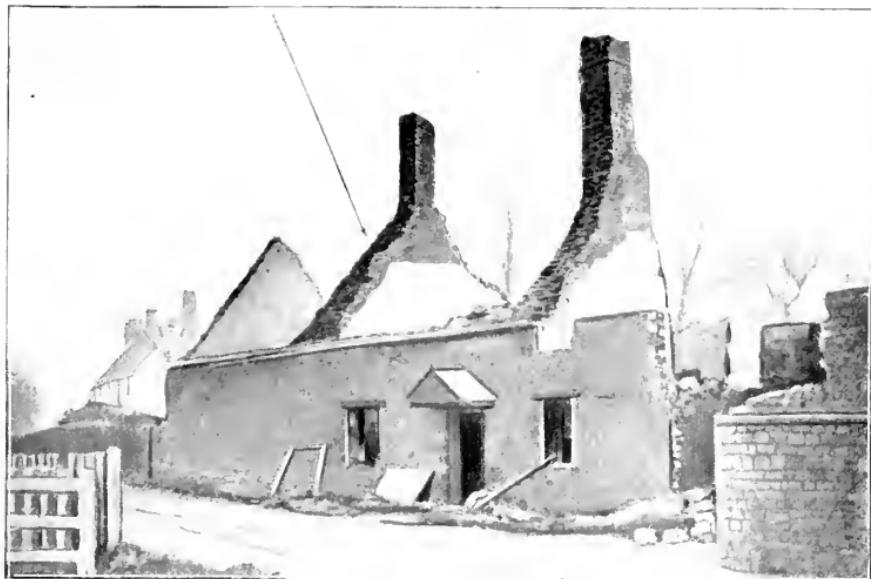
GRAFTON REGIS

London and Northampton. The echoes of their footsteps linger in the corridors of Time. They lived and loved—laughed, sang, and feasted. They had their day and passed into the great silence. But still the Cross remains. Fire and sword have left it inviolate, and the storms of centuries have broken over it in vain.

Grafton Regis, the chief object of this pilgrimage, is about eight miles beyond the monument, but it may be approached from the south by way of the old town of Stony Stratford where the sluggish Ouse is choked with reeds and water-plants, the mill streams are overhung with willows, and many quaint buildings and mouldering churches still abide and decorate the district. It is, indeed, a land of dreams. In this brooding land of silent lanes and thatched dwellings, old tales and superstitions still linger. Thus, in the churchyard at Passenham, near Stony Stratford, there is shown the grave of a Mrs. Day who declared that if there was a God a gooseberry bush would grow upon her grave. Such is the tale which is told in the district, and the gooseberry bush is very much in evidence—a sturdy, flourishing tree which has thrust the stones aside to find the genial light of the sun.

Turning northward along the High Street of Stony Stratford, the wanderer crosses the bridge over the Ouse and old Stratford is reached, a scattered hamlet of a few cottages and an inn. There is a sharp turn to the right and he enters at once into the absolute quiet of the countryside.

The secret chamber



THE BURNT-OUT HOUSE OF THE SMITHS

THE VILLAGE

A chance wayfarer, a rural postman on his rounds, or a farmer's cart are all the persons or objects likely to be met. The grey road stretches on and on by hedgerow and woodland, meadows and cornfields, and by thatched cottages and farm-houses from which rises the white, sweet-smelling smoke of the wood fires ; and after three miles of tramping he finds himself in the hamlet of Yardley Gobion—an old-world place, full of picturesque nooks and corners which seem to await discovery by some appreciative artist.

If disposed to follow old Shenstone's habit to find a welcome in an inn, the "Coffee Pot" Tavern opens its doors on one hand or the "Pack Horse" on the other. If, however, neither of these places offers any temptation to linger, a further walk of two miles brings the wayfarer to Grafton Regis. On climbing the hill to the little place, it will doubtless be recalled that England's kings and queens have oft-time travelled over this road—gay young Edward IV., Richard III., and their Queens, Henry VIII. with Ann Boleyn, Queen Elizabeth, James I., each at one time or another made it his or her business or pleasure to visit the stately manor house of Grafton Regis.

The high road runs northwards through the hamlet to Northampton. On the right hand there will be observed a *roofless burnt-out dwelling-place*. This was long the home of the "Grafton" picture and of the last of the Smiths of Grafton Regis, its former owners. By passing down the second lane that branches to the right and by the modern

GRAFTON REGIS

village school, the cottage post-office and another quaint building or two, the traveller reaches the manor-house, the church, and the rectory, and it is around the manor-house that many historical associations gather. It is a somewhat commonplace-looking building of moderate size, surrounded by trim gardens, lawns, and orchards, and was once the seat of the Duke of Grafton. Adjacent is the church, and, in a quiet hollow near by, the rectory hides itself away from the eyes of the curious.

The mansion, standing on the site of the earlier house, is mainly a seventeenth-century building, erected by the first Duke of Grafton (a son of King Charles II. and Barbara Villiers) between the years 1675 and 1690. The second Duke, however, became Ranger of Whittlebury Forest in 1712, and removed to Wakefield Lodge, Potterspury, which he rebuilt and which has since been the seat of the Dukes of Grafton.

In the eighteenth century Grafton House was occupied by "the tenant of the manor farm," and it is from a descendant of this tenant, Joseph Smith, that the portrait has been obtained. But there was an earlier Grafton House upon the site of the present building—"the bravest and best seat in the Kingdom,"¹ as a writer in the seventeenth century described it. Undoubtedly this earlier building must have been a place of mediæval splendour. In the fifteenth century it was the residence of Sir Richard Woodville, a Lancastrian knight, who had married Jacqueline of Luxem-

¹ Bridge, "History of Northamptonshire."



THE CHURCH OF GRAFTON REGIS
GARRISONED BY THE ROYALISTS, 1642

THE LADY GRAY

bourg, daughter of the Count of St. Pol, and widow of John, Duke of Bedford. In Grafton House their beautiful but ill-starred daughter Elizabeth was born. This lady married Sir John Gray of Groby, and when her husband was slain on the side of Lancaster at the second battle of St. Albans she returned with her two sons to the home of her childhood.

And now began a chapter in the life of Elizabeth Gray which opened with such fair promise of happiness, but which was to end in unutterable misery for herself and violent deaths for the two Edwardian princes born to her.

It was in the month of April, 1464, that young King Edward IV. stayed in the woods of Whittlebury instead of joining his army in the north.

“The Lady Gray was still young, and her remarkable beauty was little impaired by the sorrows she had endured; and the King, while hunting, chancing to visit Grafton, she took the opportunity to throw herself at his feet, and entreat the restoration of her husband’s estates for the sake of her unfortunate children. At the sight of her beauty, heightened by her suppliant attitude, the inflammable king fell suddenly and deeply in love with her. He in his turn became a suitor, and as her prudence or her virtue would not allow her to listen to dishonourable proposals, the infatuated monarch privately married her.”¹

There is a more pastoral view of this story told in ballad form. It is said that hearing of the King hunting in Whittlebury Forest the Lady Elizabeth Gray sought for him there.

¹ Mauder’s “Treasury of History.” Fol. 247.

GRAFTON REGIS

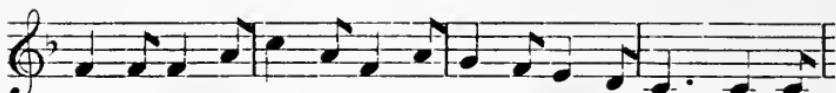
YE KING AND YE LADYE GRAY

A BALLAD OF GRAFTON REGIS

AIR—TRADITIONAL.



Ye La-dye Gray a wi-dow left, Her children of their lands be-reft, Went



in ye woods so neat and deft, To sue King Edward's mer-cies. She



met a youth with bow and speare, Swift on ye track of wounded deere. She



call'd him, "Sir, please you come here, And tell me where ye King is."

A BALLAD

The youth, he stopped, concealed a sneere
“ What would you with the King, my deare ? ”
When in her eye there sprang a teare,

He said—“ Why here the King is.”
Behold them now each one beside,
The King he woos her for his bride,
She will his wife or nought betide
The King at Grafton Regis.

Ye Ladye Gray had many a fighte,
The King her favours found but slighte,
He married her at dead of night,
The bride of Grafton Regis.

'Twas on the first of smiling May
When birds do sing and lambkins play,
A Queen was made of Ladye Gray—
His Queen at Grafton Regis.

And when she came to London towne,
The Lords and Dukes and Earls did frowne
That she should dare to weare the crowne
Above their gracious lieges.

Her father, he was made an Earl,
Advancement made to many a churl,
While to the King she was the pearl
He found at Grafton Regis.

T. K.



Carved Stone on Stable

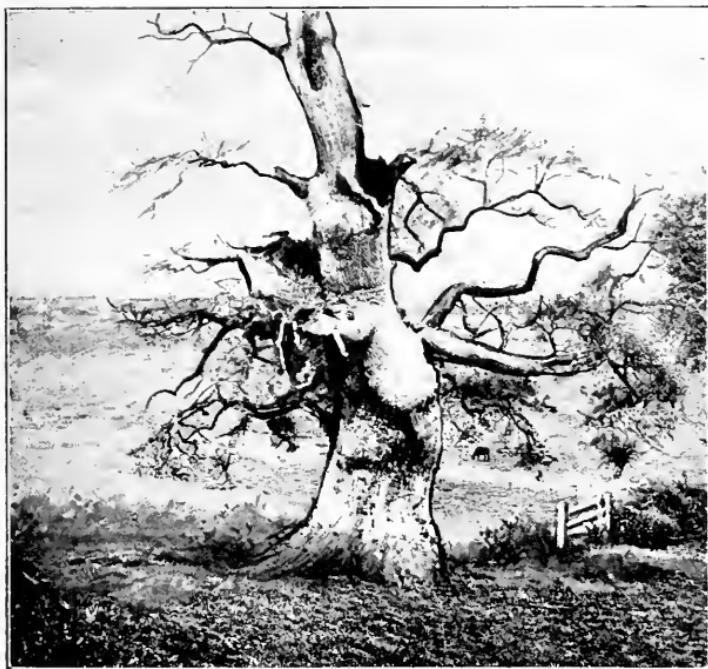
GRAFTON REGIS

It was under a spreading oak tree that tradition says they met, and this giant of the forest, which bears the name of the “Queen’s Oak,” still remains. Though still green and vigorous, the trunk of this mighty tree is hollow, and some idea of its girth may be gained from the fact that twelve persons could stand together upright within.

The story of King Edward’s wooing of Elizabeth Woodville has been told by many writers. It also provides the subject of one of the scenes in Shakespeare’s *King Henry VI.* Pt. iii., Act iii., Sc. ii.

King Edward and Lady Gray were married privately at Grafton House on May Day, 1464. He was compelled for some time to visit her only in secret ; in fact, five months had elapsed before he ventured to inform the Lords of his Council that he had married the Lady of Grafton Regis.

Thus began the historical period of Grafton House. Its association with the Plantagenets was continued in the year 1483 when Richard III., having provided for the security of London, hastened to the north to raise additional forces. Being joined by the Earl of Northumberland and other nobles, he advanced into Northamptonshire with his army, and on the 19th June halted at Grafton House ready to move in any direction that might be necessary. Richard had, indeed, been in the neighbourhood some little time before,



THE QUEEN'S OAK

for at the beginning of April, on the death of Edward IV., the widowed queen had immediately sent for her son (Edward V.), then resident at Ludlow Castle. On the 22nd April he reached Stony Stratford under the escort of Earl Rivers. Richard III. on the same day reached Northampton, to which place the Earl Rivers and Lord Richard Gray came to salute him on behalf of the young king. Next day they all rode forward together to Stony Stratford, but before reaching the town Earl Rivers was entrapped into an ambuscade and seized. Others also of the Woodville party were arrested, and afterwards beheaded ; and from that moment the doom of the young king was sealed.

In 1529, King Henry VIII. being desirous of obtaining a divorce from his Queen, Catherine of Arragon, made application to Pope Clement, who issued a commission to Cardinals Campeggio and Wolsey to try and determine the cause. Accordingly the King and Queen were cited before them in June of that year, and the King's Council closed their case in the month following ; but instead of proceeding to judgment Campeggio adjourned the Court to September. In the meantime the Pope sent an evocation of the cause to himself at Rome, inhibiting any further proceedings by the legates, and Campeggio prepared to leave the kingdom. His last interview with the King took place at Grafton House, and is

GRAFTON REGIS

described with minuteness and simplicity by Cavendish, the faithful attendant and biographer of Wolsey, who accompanied his brother cardinal.

One learns further that ambassadors from Hungary came from Stony Stratford to visit the King at Grafton in September, 1531, he having recently arrived from Woodstock. On another occasion it is recorded by his almoner that he paid two poor women that were healed of their sickness 15/-, and that during three years he touched fifty-nine persons for the King's Evil, each of whom received 7/-. The aforementioned almoner also paid to the servant of the Mayor of Northampton 5/- for pears brought for the King's Grace ; to a poor woman who supplied the King with pears and nuts in the forest 4/8 ; and to Sir Robert Bone, overseer of the Works at Grafton, £10 for repairs.

Mention may also be made of a long list of gratuities paid to the keeper of Grafton Park, woodmen, and servants. For instance, on the 10th September, 1531, the almoner paid 20/- to a person who brought a couple of greyhounds out of Wales. On the same day he paid one Anthony £10. 10s. od. for a clock in a case of gold. On the following day the King departed and there was paid 2/6 for a cart to carry the hounds from Grafton to Ampthill.

On 29th July, 1532, King Henry returned to Grafton and the hounds were carted back again.

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND JAMES I.

On the same day was paid to “**the Smythe that carried the locke about in reward 7/6; paid to the French fletcher (arrow-maker) by the King's commandment £3. 6s. 8d. To a monk who brought a letter and a purse to the King at Grafton 20/-.** On the 1st August paid to Peter Falconer for his cote by the King's commandment 22/6; paid Michell Pylieson that gave an angle-rod unto the King's grace at Grafton, 15/-.”

After paying all the keepers, the King again left for Woodstock on the 6th August, and there was paid to Master Russell 31/4 for “reparations” done at Grafton ; also “**to Wm. Knevet for his annuity for one quarter ending at midsummer £6.**”

By these accounts it will be seen that Grafton was a noble and richly appointed residence.

For centuries before the days of the Tudor kings, even in Saxon times, Grafton had been the residence of the Wyvilles, Widevilles, or Woodvilles. In 1527, however, Thomas, second Marquis of Dorset, conveyed the Manors of Grafton and Hartwell, with the patronage of the churches, to King Henry VIII. in exchange for other manors in Leicestershire. In 1541, King Henry erected Grafton into an honor, and to it were annexed some fifty-seven lordships, manors, forests, &c. At this time “Regis” was added to the place-name.

It may be noted in passing that Queen Elizabeth visited the house in 1568 ; and twice during his reign King James I. stayed at Grafton and there knighted sundry gentlemen of the county.

GRAFTON REGIS

In the earlier part of the reign of King Charles I. Grafton House was occupied by the family of Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, as a convenient resting-place on their journeys from the north to London. The historian of Craven, referring to the household accounts of Earl Francis, observes that “**baked meats were more in use two centuries ago than now; and when a part of the Clifford family resided at Grafton, in Northamptonshire, not only pasties of red deer venison were sent thither by express from Skipton, but carcasses of stags, two, four, or more at once, were baked whole, and despatched to the same place. Amongst the items of expense are ‘for three bushels of wheat to bake two stags 15/-, charges for currants and lemons which were put in the ‘stag pies’; and to William Townley for 6lbs. and 1oz. of pepper, for baking a stag sent to Grafton, for another sent to Westmoreland and Cumberland for the assizes, and one bestowed by my lord in the country upon divers persons 18/8.’**”¹

The manors of Grafton Regis were mortgaged by Charles I. to Sir Francis Crane, Chancellor of the Order of the Garter, who had been engaged in the production of tapestry at Mortlake. Sir Francis, who was much interested in this manufacture, took Grafton Regis ostensibly with a similar object, and the designs, portraits and the like in colours that were necessary adjuncts to the work may afford a reason for finding pictures and portraits of importance there.²

¹ Baker's “History of Northamptonshire.”

² See Appendix (No. II.) for documents relating to the mortgage and the manufacture of tapestry.



THE DESTRUCTION BY FIRE

IV.

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

“ How the fierce Zealots fought and bled
For King or State as humour led;
Some for a dream of public good,
Some for church tippet, gown, and hood,
Draining their veins in death to claim
A patriot’s or a martyr’s name.
There’s Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes,
There’s Erin’s high Ormond, and Scotland’s Montrose,
Would you match the base Skippon and Massey and
Brown,
With the Barons of England who fight for the Crown ? ”
Rokeby.

During the Civil War in the year 1643 Grafton House, then in the occupation of Lady Crane, was garrisoned for the King, the commander being Sir John Digby. In December of that year the Parliamentarians were in possession of Northampton and Newport Pagnell, the Royalists holding Towcester as well as Grafton House. The following curious account of the beleaguerment and final surrender and destruction of this noble mansion takes the form of a letter written to a friend by one of the officers in command at the time, and is to be found in a collection of “ Weekly News Sheets ” in the British Museum. It is entitled : —

“ A True Relation of the Taking of Grafton House by the Parliament’s Forces under the

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

Command of Sergeant-Major Skipton (Skippon)
With the demands of Sir John Digby upon
a Surrender. And the Resolute Answer of
Sergeant-Major Skipton to the said demands as
it was sent in a Letter from a Commander
to his friend in London. With the names
of the Chief Commanders that were taken
prisoners, &c. Printed for John Wright in the
Old Bailey, December 29, 1643."

"Sir, I thought it good to relate unto you the service
lately performed here in these parts. On Tuesday night
last (21 Dec.) about eight o'clock there was command
given for a party of horse of our owne and Colonell
Norwich's mett us and were our Van and Rear-guard,
so we marcht with foure pieces of artillery towards
Grafton Regis, six miles off from this place; where we
understood that our enemies were enclosed in a strong
house of the Ladie Crane and the Church of the same
towne; whereupon we faced it and leaving it on our
right hand we marcht forward towards Toxiter (Tow-
cester) as though we had been bound thitherward. But
when we came within a mile of the said towne of Toxiter
wee met with a party of horse and foote that came from
Northampton for our assistance, under the command of
Colonell Wettam, whereupon we faced about, and the
party of the Orange Regiment which before brought up
the Reare then marcht in the Van and Colonell Williams'
forces followed in the Reare of the party that came
from Newport. But when we came within sight of
the house the old souldiers of my Lord's outmarcht
us, and gave the onset very courageously and were
as bravely answered; and by reason of the strength of the
walls and well fortifying of the same our musquetiers
did them small injury at that time; whereupon there
were two of our pieces planted against the house and

THE FIGHT AT GRAFTON

played upon it, but they did not much annoy them neither. On the Saturday morning (23 Dec.) the Orange and Green Regiments relieved my lord's souldiers, and when any advantage could be gained against our enemies we made use of it. They within had very long pieces, and could reach us at a distance. At our guard, we having found a convenient place to plant a piece, made use of it and beat down with our Sacre before Saturday night a brestwork on the top of the house which had done us much annoyance, and also a window whereat they shot out at us. On Sunday morning (24 Dec.) we were relieved by those Northampton forces under the Command of Colonell Wettam, and about two hours after we had the guard, and they within sounded a parley, but through the eagerness of the Souldiers the Drum was shot, but not slaine outright; whereupon they sent out a Trumpet, and had parley granted for half an hour, and after that another halfe hour, so they yielded themselves prisoners, being in number nine score and seven besides officers, whereof Sir John Digby was chiefe; there was another officer of note, viz., Major Brookbanck and divers Captains, some of them men of about £700 a yeare a piece, whose names are to me unknowne. At about two of the clocke on Sunday *the Souldiers entered the house where they found great and rich plunder which they had for their paines.* In the taking of this house wee lost about 20 men and had hurt about 10, besides 9 that were hurt by our own powder. On Christmas Day (Monday) before day, order was given to fire our huts which we had made in the field; and for prevention of future inconvenience *the house was fired also.* So we marched with our prisoners (guarded by the other forces that assisted us) towards Newport, very weary by reason of the foulness of the

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

weather, the deepnesse of the way, but praised be God we got safely thither, where we now lye expecting relief everyday, that we may come and rest ourselves. I thank God that neither myselfe, nor any of my souldiers are hurt, nor not one of our Regiment slaine, notwithstanding we were in great danger and hazard. I beseech God make us thankful for this preservation of us: there were some that came to us on our guard as spectators, being a Surveyor of the Works and a Captain of a Troope of Horse, slaine at one shot, and also a Gunner that belonged to the Sacre in our guard. I pray remember my love to my neighbours, so with my best respects unto you I rest your loving friend and neighbour,

W. B.

Newport Pannel, 25 December, 1643."

"Sir John Digby, his demands—Sir, as we are determined to carry ourselves like gentlemen and men of honour, so if you will please to consent to conditions fit for such, we shall surrender this place unto you. The conditions we desire are these: 1. That we may march forth with our arms, Horses and Baggage and as well those that have not borne Arms, as those that have, may march forth to Oxford in the aforesaid manner without any violence to be offered till they arrive at Oxford; and have a safe conduct to Banbury. 2. That both the souldiers and the People of the house may have two days liberty after the surrender of the place, to carry away their goods, and the carts of the country allowed them in; and the souldiers may have six houres liberty and (in) the house to remove Bag and Baggage, if you consent that this be made good by those that are here."

"John Digby."

THE SURRENDER

Major Generall Skipton's answer.

"1. To surrender all your persons prisoners, and all Arms, Horses, Standards, Colours, and all Provisions of Warre, whatsoever with all that is within the house.
2. That you deliver all those souldiers of ours which have been taken prisoners by you, and that if any of your souldiers prisoners taken by us that your souldiers shall expect the like usage from me. 3. And these things being performed, I shall preserve and set at liberty all women, children, and such other persons as have not bin in arms against us. 4. And all these to be performed by you in one hour, or else present advertisement within one quarter of an hour after delivery of these articles. Philip Skipton."

Besides this lengthy report of the siege and destruction of Grafton House there were many other accounts in the news-sheets of the period. One of these is thus headed :—

"Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves."

The Scottish Dove.

(From Friday 22nd December to 29th of same.)

"Sent out and returning; bringing intelligence from the armies as an antidote against the poisonous insinuations of Mercurius Aulicus and the errors of other intelligences."

It then proceeds :—

"From Northampton it is certified that Sergeant-Major Skippon stormed Grafton House. He took in that house Sir John Digby and Sir Edward Longueville, with three of our colonels more and divers gentlemen with

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

300 prisoners and 80 horses, with all their arms and much good pillage and were intended to make that house their rendezvous of pleasure this Christmas. Dec. 29th, 1643. Printed according to order for L.C.

"Sir John Digby and other commanders that were taken by Sergeant-Major Skippon at Grafton came yesternight to town and are this day committed to the new prison. Saturday Dec. 30.

"That brave conquest which the victorious citizens obtained under Sergeant-Major Skippon against the cavaliers at Grafton where they took 7 colonels, 680 armes, 6 pieces of ordnance, 80 horses, and above 300 prisoners besides, with a good store of treasure for reward of these valiant soldiers; here we may take notice of God's goodness who struck such horror into the hearts of the cavaliers (as some of them have confessed) they were so struck with a strange amazement in the citizens marching up to them, that they had no power to consider what to do. This was from God an extraordinary worke and there be others as strange as these."

The Weekly Accompt.

"Of certain speed and remarkable passages from both houses of Parliament and other parts of the Kingdom."

Wherein we read :—

"This day it was advertised that Sergeant-Major Skippon stormed Grafton in Northamptonshire, and, after some assault, was master of it.

"It being a house which belonged to Her Majesty, of great value, the taking of the place will much prepare the said noble Sergeant and encourage his soldiers to fall upon the garrison at Tocaster."

THE PLUNDER

Again, we have :—

The Mercurius Civicus No. 31.

(From Thursday Dec. 21st to Thursday Dec. 28th, 1643.)

“Sergeant-Major Skippon having drawn forth a party of the most renowned citizens of London (who for their valour, fidelity, and constancy unto the Commonwealth, and for the preservation of the known laws and liberties of the subjects of the Kingdom, especially in these modern times are no whit inferior to the ancient citizens of Rome) having a party of Northampton forces joined him, had stormed Grafton House, a place of great strength and consequence, and obtained the same after divers furious onset made against it. He took them (prisoners &c. enumerated) 4 score brave horses, besides many other things of great worth and estimation which the common soldiers divided amongst themselves.”

There was also

The True Informer.

“Containing a collection of the most special and observable passages which have been informed this week from several parts of His Majesty’s dominions.”

This paper, covering the dates from December 23 to 30, states that :—

“About 2 o’clock on Sunday in the afternoon our Soldiers entered the house where they found great and rich plunder which they had for their paines.

“There were lost on the Parliament side 20 men, and 10 hurt, besides those that were hurt with their own powder. There was also an officer of ours stabbed most perfidiously with a knife by a malicious woman

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

that had been in the house after they had granted them quarter for their lives."

The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer

sent abroad to prevent mis-information, states :—

"It was advertised the Parliament that Sergeant-Major Skippon with a party of honored citizens of London and a party of Northampton forces stormed the great house of Grafton (Her Majesty's own jointure) and obtained the same."

Another news sheet says :—

"If any ask why Sir John Digby yielded Grafton House so soon it is answered—the women and children cried, and the soldiers within would not fight. If it be asked why the house was burnt, it is answered—it is not known why nor who did it."

Sir John Digby, a papist, was brother of Sir Kenelm Digby, and son of Sir Everard Digby, who was executed as one of the ringleaders in the Gunpowder Plot. It may here be noted that Sir John made his escape from prison, joined the King's army again, and was killed at the battle of Longport, in Somersetshire, in 1645, after having expended £25,000 in the royal cause.

The surprising statement that an officer was perfidiously stabbed with a knife by a malicious woman leads to speculation upon the cause for such a catastrophe. Surely there must have been some strong provocation for such an act—or was this the close of some subtle underlying drama which found its consummation in that out-of-the-way corner of a troubled kingdom ?

In conjunction with this it may be noted that a tradition is still current in the village, that

A TRAGEDY

eleven people were killed in the drawing-room of Grafton, but for what reason is not known.

It may, however, be surmised that some young officer, elated with victory, attempted a liberty with one of the high-souled damsels, and she being armed, as doubtless all the women were on that occasion for their own protection, resented the attack in a too forcible manner.

It is obvious that there was no time or means for a court-martial, the exigency demanded severity, all those implicated in any way were thrust into the drawing-room and there shot. In all probability this is the origin of the tradition. There is a monument with two crosses thereon within the church which it is said was put up in memory of the Royalists killed in the drawing-room of Grafton House.¹

It is perhaps but reasonable to assume that the firing of the house was prompted by motives of revenge and to prevent its being again used by the Royalists. It also reveals the ruthless nature of Civil War—as does the following fact related by Mr. Fletcher Moss in his “Pilgrimages to Old Homes.”

“It was on Christmas Eve a troop of Royalists came to Barthomley in Cheshire when unarmed Roundheads were in the church. Christmas was not Merry Christmas then, for the soldiers of God and the King cut the throats of twelve of the Puritans, stripped their bodies and left them there.”²

¹ Rev. A. Goldberg, M.A., “A Short History of Grafton Regis.”

² See Appendix, p. 78, for a note on the Sack of Corfe Castle in 1646.

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

Sir Walter Scott gives us a vivid impression of such another scene in his poem "Rokeby":—

"A shot is heard—Again the flame
Flashed thick and fast—a volley came!
Then echoed wildly from within,
Of shout and scream the mingled din,
And weapon-clash, and maddening cry
Of those who kill, and those who die!
As filled the hall with sulphurous smoke
More red, more dark, the death-flash broke,
And forms were on the lattice cast,
That struck, or struggled, as they passed."

Grafton House was, according to the State Papers, "the bravest and best seat in the Kingdom." "It was a house of great value," containing "things of great worth and estimation, which the common soildiers divided amongst themselves"; whilst another account assures us that it contained "great and rich plunder which the soildiers had for their paines." We can, therefore, be in no doubt as to the rare treasures which were given to the spoliation and fire. Now what became of all this plunder?

At 2 p.m. on Sunday (Christmas Eve) Grafton House was surrendered to the soldiers. As negotiations for a surrender were understood to be in progress and the firing had ceased this would bring the villagers about the place. The principal yeoman of Grafton Regis was Anthony Smith, and his farmstead was the nearest building to it. As the plunder was brought out by the soldiers Anthony Smith would be better able to receive and store it in his house and buildings than anyone else.

Think of the scene on this Christmas Eve when it was becoming dark about four o'clock. The marshalling of the prisoners, the execution in the drawing-room, the question of what to do with the slain bodies, and how to secure the prisoners whilst the plunder is going on. Truly it was an anxious time for Colonels Wettam and Skippon. A solution was quickly found. On Christmas morning early an end was made by firing the mansion and marching away with the prisoners to London before a rescue could be attempted and questions difficult to answer could be raised.

Such trifles as pictures and other impedimenta would be left behind without any account being taken of them or of those with whom they were deposited, and although some might be reclaimed many would never be asked for in the vicissitudes of a campaign in which many were killed or dispersed to other parts of the kingdom, never to see Grafton Regis again.

In 1643, only fifty-five years after the picture was painted, it would be fresh and dainty, framed to its surroundings and a desirable thing to possess by anyone of understanding. We find that with Lady Crane in Grafton House at its taking were Sir John Digby (brother to Sir Kenelm Digby, a prodigy of learning and valour whose admirable portrait by Van Dyck is in the National Portrait Gallery). Of three ministers of the Gospel who were present was one Thomas Bunning, called the "Parson Bunning." He was Chaplain to Lady Crane and signed the Register as curate of Grafton Regis in 1640. He was a learned young man, and a very good preacher, and was released

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

as a non-combatant together with the women and children.

He would naturally be well acquainted with all the treasures of the house and have some acquaintance with the writings of Shakespeare of whom a portrait would be held in high estimation.

In the stress and trouble of battle, taking no part in it by reason of his cloth, his mind would be set upon the safety of the women and children and the preservation of all things upon which he set value. He and Anthony Smith would secure the pickings of the treasures, as it became incumbent upon him to preserve what could be saved from the spoils in the interest of his patron, Lady Crane of Grafton.

The picture known as the “Grafton Shakespeare” undoubtedly formed a part of these spoils, and its history, as well as that of the Smith family, who were the former owners of the picture, is told in the following interesting details kindly communicated to me by Mr. Solomon Wilcox, Parish Clerk of Grafton Regis, in his 81st year, and by his daughter Miss Wilcox.

He states that for many generations the Smiths lived at the “Manor Farm” on the site upon which the village school now stands, and that they moved into a house which was destroyed by fire in 1908. This house stands by the roadside and was tenanted for many generations by another branch of the family and, later, was the home of Selina Smith before her marriage to Harry Ludgate. It was from this house that the picture was sent to Winston-on-Tees and received there by Mrs. Ludgate, to whom it had been left by her

THE SECRET CHAMBER

father John Smith, who had received it from his great-uncle Joseph Smith, one of the later tenants of the "Manor Farm."

Many years ago the then agent gave the tenant of the house by the roadside notice to quit, but upon an appeal to the Duke of Grafton he gave a verbal promise that so long as a male Smith of that family remained alive he should not be turned out. Mr. Wilcox remembers the portrait hanging in Smith's house where at one time it was in the best bedroom. A doctor who attended one of the family wished to buy it and also sent a friend to purchase it, but John Smith refused to sell.

In the house was a secret chamber in which Stephen Blunt, a nephew of one of the Smiths, was hidden for some time.

The secret room was situated behind the parlour chimney within the inner wall above the dairy.

There is also a tradition that this "Grafton" Shakespeare had for a long time been kept in this secret room before it was hung in the living-room of the house. A very likely explanation of the reason for this may be that it would not be in the interests of past generations of the Smiths to advertise the fact that they were in possession of a picture which had once adorned a king's house. It has been previously noted that the portrait of Shakespeare was not known as such at Grafton Regis. Its likeness to Shakespeare does not appear to have been suggested until after its removal to Winston-on-Tees. Yet it would almost seem that a suspicion of its identity had been aroused even before the portrait left Grafton Regis.

THE SACK OF GRAFTON HOUSE

The Duke of Grafton's agent at Potterspury is good enough to say that he sees no reason to question the truth of these communications. The tradition, he said, that the Smiths had for some 300 years occupied the house in which Corbett Smith died, was generally accepted. Though he had little in the nature of old records at hand, the Duke's agent was able to say that in the year 1747 Joseph Smith paid a half-year's rental of £56 from Lady Day to Michaelmas, presumably for the "Manor Farm" though, as a matter of fact, the farms on the Grafton estates have no distinctive names.

The claims of the Smiths to descent from Anthony Smith, the tenant of the Manor Farm during the siege of Grafton Manor House, are borne out by the Parish Registers which, by the courtesy of the present rector, the Rev. A. W. Annand, M.A., have been consulted.

The registers date back to 1584, but it will be sufficient for the purpose of this enquiry to state that there appears the following entry under the year 1642 :

"Anne ye wife of Anthony Smith, buried October 28th."
And again in the year following, 1643 :

"Anthony Smith, and Cecily Burrow now married May 1."

This Anthony Smith must have been a man of substance in Grafton Regis, and it is noted in the Parish Register that he is "now married"—why "now"? It would seem that he ought to have been married before and that there was rejoicing on May Day of 1643 for the wedding which then took place between him and Cecily Burrow. It was on Christmas Day of this same year, 1643,

A N T H O N Y S M I T H

that the Royal Residence of Grafton Regis was sacked and burnt.

During the Protectorate, in the year 1656, we find in the register of burials

" Margaret Smith, daughter of Anthony Smith, buried the 27th day of December."

Here, then, is a record that Anthony Smith, who lived at the Manor Farm at the time of the destruction of Grafton House, was a parishioner thirteen years afterwards. Whether he was a Roundhead or Royalist we have now no means of knowing, but it is clear that he was able to retain his position in the place, and that his family grew and flourished, putting forth new shoots as the old ones withered. And so they have been traced down to the mother of Agnes and Florence Ludgate who inherited the "Grafton" portrait.



OLD FLINT-LOCK PISTOL FROM GRAFTON REGIS.





THE LAST OF THE SMITHS AND THE HOUSE WHENCE
THE PORTRAIT WAS SENT TO WINSTON

V.

APPENDIX

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APPENDIX

I.

Extract from "The Tribune," 18th February, 1907.

"If this picture were generally accepted as an actual portrait of Shakespeare, it would have a special interest in that it represents Shakespeare at an earlier age than he has been portrayed by any other artist, for in 1588 Shakespeare was twenty-four years of age.

"It is due to Mr. M. H. Spielmann, formerly editor of the defunct *Magazine of Art*, that the Bridgewater Arms picture has been again brought to public notice. For many years past it had been hanging among a collection of sporting prints in the little bar parlour of the inn. No particular value was attached to it until a few years ago a rumour got abroad that it was a portrait of Shakespeare. This rumour recently came to the ears of Mr. Spielmann, and as he is at present engaged in preparing a volume on the Shakespeare portraits, he wrote to the Misses Ludgate asking for the history of the picture and a photograph of it.

"Mr. Spielmann, who was seen yesterday by a representative of *The Tribune*, declined to make any definite statement as to the authenticity of the picture. He has not yet had the opportunity of inspecting it, and, being engaged in disposing of the claims of scores of alleged Shakespeare portraits, he preserves a healthy cynicism pending investigations.

"Judging simply from the photograph which the Misses Ludgate forwarded him, Mr. Spielmann acknowledges that even though it were not an authentic portrait of Shakespeare, it would probably fetch a couple of hundred pounds at Christie's.

"'If it can be proved to be a Shakespeare,' said Mr. Spielmann, 'it is impossible to estimate its value. It would be worth £10,000 to buy it for the nation, but it is not unlikely that an American would offer £50,000 for it.'"

SIR F. CRANE AT GRAFTON

II.

SIR FRANCIS CRANE AND GRAFTON REGIS.

In the "Domestic State Papers" of the earlier part of the seventeenth century there are many references to this mansion at that time in the occupation of Sir Francis Crane.

"1628. Feb. 27. Contract between the King Charles I. and Sir Francis Crane, Chancellor of the order of the Garter, for conveyance to Sir Francis of the manors of Grafton, etc. . . . as security for £7,500 by him to be advanced for the King's service."

"1630. Suggested agreement with Sir Francis Crane for the sale of lands at Grafton, assured to him as security for £7,500 advanced to the King, with proposal for the establishment of the manufacture of tapestry within the manor-house of Grafton, and the bringing up within the same of a constant succession of two boys as apprentices to be instructed in that art."

"1631. July 15. Warrant to repay to Sir Francis Crane £5,000 with interest at the rate of 8 per cent. paid by him for the purchase of £200 a year in fee-farm of lands within the manor of Grafton upon an agreement which could not be made good."

"1635. Notes by Sir Francis Crane of the terms upon which he advanced His Majesty first £7,500 and afterwards £5,000 on the security of lands at Grafton offers to relinquish his bargain on repayment of the money advanced and interest."

"1635. Sir Robert Osborne to the King. The Manor of Grafton has been mortgaged by His Majesty to Sir Francis Crane for £7,600. *It is the bravest and best seat in the Kingdom, a seat for a Prince and not a subject.* For the good of His Majesty's children hopes he will redeem the mortgage. The forfeiture is taken, and all His Majesty's tenants pay their rents to Sir Francis Crane. Hopes His Majesty will provide for his children as others do whom he has advanced. There is a general inclosing and converting of arable land into

APPENDIX

pasture, which is the cause of great dearth in the Kingdom, by reformation whereof there may be great benefit raised to the King, and great good to his poor subjects."

The economic advantages of such a "reformation" will be sufficiently obvious, but apparently nothing was done. The house and lands were not redeemed by the King, and, after the death of Sir Francis, Lady Crane continued in occupation there.

The family seat of the Cranes was Stoke Park, in the neighbouring parish of Stoke-Bruerne. Here he had built a stately mansion, from an Italian design, in the execution of which he received the assistance of Inigo Jones. It may be noted in passing that the tapestry-weaving industry which Sir Francis proposed to establish at Grafton House appears to have been a matter in which he took much interest, for he first began its manufacture at Mortlake, in Surrey, in the reign of King James I. and was principally encouraged in the undertaking by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Buckingham.

"The Cartoons of Raphael were designed (Circa 1590) to decorate the Papal Chapel of Pope Leo X. It is the generally received opinion that these works were purchased by Charles I. at the recommendation of Rubens, but there is reason to believe that they were brought to England in the reign of his father James I. who had promoted an extensive manufactory of tapestry at Mortlake and given Sir Francis Crane £2,000 towards its erection.—'Percy Anecdotes.'"

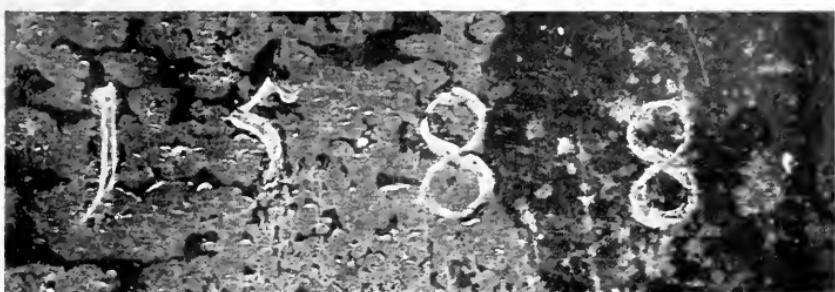
III.

THE SACK OF CORFE CASTLE IN 1646.

Corfe Castle was plundered by the Parliamentarian forces immediately after its surrender on 27th February, 1646, and a rich store of tapestry, carpets and furniture was carried away. Diligent inquiry was made for the missing articles, the lists of which exhibit a singular degree of magnificence, including many books and papers valued at £1,300. One large bed minus the feathers and one red velvet chair appear to have constituted the amount of furniture recovered.—"Guide to Corfe Castle. Authorised edition, p. 48."

A P P E N D I X

IV.



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE DATE ON THE "GRAFTON" PICTURE.

An opinion has been expressed that there is a figure "3" within or above the last figure of the date "1588." As this does not appear to the writer to be the case, the question has been submitted to several experts whose conclusions are given in the following letters. The above photograph was taken when the surface was wet with water to bring out every mark thereon so that each observer may form his own opinion.

This operation has not been innocuous to the picture, as exposure to the brilliant arc light when wet has removed the dark scale of age from the figures 1588.

CRITICS ON THE FIGURES

V.

From MR. F. IRELAND, Principal of the Central Photo-Engraving Co., Lower Mosley Street, Manchester.

Having had the painting for purposes of preparing photographs, and having enlarged the date and age, and after carefully criticising the same through a powerful glass, I am able to state that there has been no alteration of the figures 1588.

20th May, 1911.

From MR. HENRY CADNESS, Fellow of the Society of Art Masters, Manchester School of Art.

The picture is undoubtedly a genuine painting of the period indicated by the date 1588.

The date 1588 is not an alteration from 1583 as might be supposed from the markings under the figure 8—these markings are certainly roughnesses in the priming of the ground on the oak panel.

The expression and character of features and the masterly treatment in the painting and colouring are strong evidences that it is a portrait of the poet painted by an expert contemporary artist.

20th May, 1911.

From MR. WALTER EMSLEY, 16, Deansgate, Manchester.
(Landscape and Figure Artist.)

I am of opinion that there is no trace of any alteration in the figures composing the date (1588), but by a strong stretch of the imagination a rude figure three may suggest itself caused by the decomposition of the paint used in priming the background.

20th May, 1911.

A P P E N D I X

From MR. W. EWEN, Photographic Engraver of the Coloured Portraits herein.

Re mark on right-hand top corner of picture.

I do not think that it is a number, but that it has been caused by the blistering of the artist's colour.

It also seems to have been accentuated by the working or warping of the wood panel on which the portrait has been painted.

20th January, 1912.

From MR. CHARLES E. TURNER, Manager, Artist and Process Departments of the "Manchester Guardian" Printing Works, Reddish.

Re the "Grafton" Shakespeare.

I have pleasure in giving the opinion that the curious appearance of the fourth figure of date 1588 is certainly not due to an erasure.

Similar protrusions from which the colour has been partly rubbed are frequent.

From MR. HUGH FREMANTLE, Scenic Artist, Gaiety Theatre, Manchester.

I have made a careful examination of the picture called the "Grafton Shakespeare," and state there is no real figure under the "8" in the top right-hand corner of the picture.

31st January, 1912.



THE "GRAFTON" PORTRAIT

Those liquid eyes and pencill'd brows enface
 With many charms thy open countenance
 Wherein emotion's every thought finds place
 And varying moods their potent wills advance.
 Blithe Comedy shall lift its smiling eyes
 Like sunshine beaming from the open skies ;
 And Tragedy with frowns shall check desire
 As thunder clouds fill dark'ning earth with ire.
 Serenely placid is thy youthful mien
 As yet unharness'd for thy godlike course,
 Yet leaping like a youthful courser, keen,
 Unwitting of thy growing virile force :
 We hail thee bard ! our England's gracious son,
 In intellect sublime, thou art our own.

F I N I S



IN THE VILLAGE OF GRAFTON REGIS



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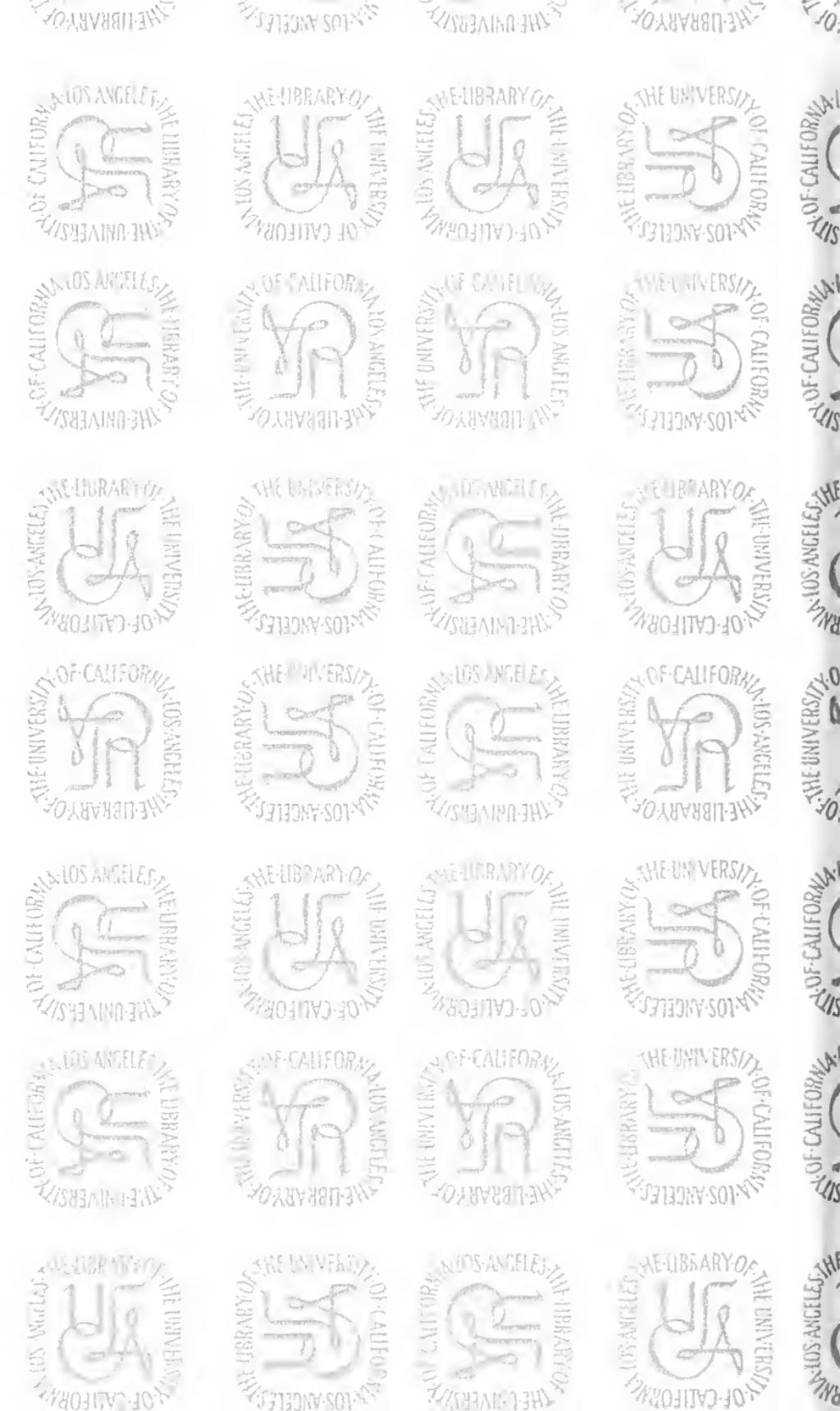
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